

Story written by Richard Scott
and submitted by Robert Fossum

Here is a touching story by a good Norwegian-American from Skotte, which is on E6 just south of Dovre, Norway. He is not currently a member of Gudbrandsdal but should be. Rick grew up in Eau Claire, WI., and attended St. Olaf College. He is a retired dentist living in Superior. Lloyd "Snowball" Severud lived much of his life in Chetek, WI. He was involved with the ski jumping part of the American Olympic Committee. Robert Fossum

Richard Scott (Skotte)
Superior, WI
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Lloyd "Snowball" Severud of Chetek, WI., died in Eau Claire, WI., on June 27, 2011 at the age of 95.

Snowball was a friend of my father and was active with the Eau Claire ski club and its Junior feeder program. There must have been a half dozen junior jumps in EC all built on the steep river banks or bluffs within the city limits. My brother Mac and I would take the city bus transportation several times a week to practice on these slides. Three of them had lights and on nice winter evenings we would just have a ball. How nice it was not to have television or computer distractions in our misspent youth. Perhaps I jest - but maybe not entirely.

It was Snowball who was both practicing and coaching us on a Saturday afternoon in February and told me it was time for me to move up to the bigger slide at Mt. Washington ski jump. I recall this as yesterday even though I was in seventh grade (is it really 60 years ago?). That forty meter jump (mostly natural except for a small starting "box") was so enormous to me then and I was so small as a child that I was quite frightened when he said it was time yet had anticipated that moment and diligently had practiced for it. We climbed the landing hill, climbed past the take -off and inspected the track to make sure it wasn't squirley in the track dip and Snowball led the way to the "box" and we put on our skis together. He gave very little instruction because he had been watching me and knew that I pretty much had the routine down. But he did do one thing. Although he had led the way up the slide he positioned his skis adjacent to the stairs leading up leaving me in the start position as we clamped down. I only remember him saying "The track looks good but you must remember when you reach the takeoff you MUST jump!" So it was either take off my skis and embarrassingly ask him to move from the steps he was blocking so I could walk from the slide humiliated.... or, tip over the edge and away we go!

Anyway, my kick over the edge may have been a bit tentative, but I fixed my eyes on the bump which was marked with a sprig of oak leaves on either side, jumped at the takeoff, felt the pressure of the air going past, cleared the knoll, had a good landing but was almost sucked down by the dip and snowplowed (I could not "telemark" those seven foot jumping skis yet) to a stop. Severud must have kicked off as soon as he saw me clear the dip because he pulled up next to me with a classy double telemark while I still had my skis on.

We jumped some more that afternoon until dark. Those times he went first and I watched closely.

My father and many family members are buried in the cemetery adjacent to the Dovre Lutheran Church in New Auburn, WI (Dovre Town in Barron County). To the left of the walk, just as you approach Dovre church is a family marker "Holter" with many of our relatives tucked in nearby. A little further on and just a bit off to the left is the vertical white and somewhat weathered looking Skotte marker with another cluster of relatives resting peacefully now after rural lives which must have been unbelievably harsh. I sometimes think of Per and of relatives such as yours and mine who are now in their own way perhaps as "Giants In The Earth". And I wonder if some of them also may have died with their skis on. Perhaps Snowball did.